

Pillsbury Milling Complex,  
Warehouse No. 2  
129 Fifth Avenue  
Minneapolis  
Hennepin County  
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-29-5-H

HABS  
MINN,  
27-MINAP  
3-H-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,  
WAREHOUSE NO. 2

HABS No. MN-29-5H

Location: 129 Fifth Avenue South East, 418-434 Second  
Street Southeast, Minneapolis, Hennepin County,  
Minnesota.

USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Universal  
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15;  
480100:4981060; 480320:4980940; 480260:4980800;  
480040:4980940

Present Owner: The Pillsbury Company  
Pillsbury Center  
200 South Sixth Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Present Occupant: The Pillsbury Company

Present Use: Warehouse

Significance: The Warehouse No. 2 is the last warehouse of this  
vintage and general character left on the  
original Pillsbury Flour Milling Complex site.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1918-1919. Building permit files show that the brick barn originally on this site was demolished by the H.N. Leighton Co. by permit dated 9-13-18. The permit for a brick warehouse measuring 200 ft. x 100 ft. was dated 9-18-18 with a permit revising the main building to include 2 more stories dated 11-27-18. These dates are corroborated by copies of the original plans and preliminary drawings on file at the Pillsbury Co. Permits for Electrical work are dated 1-13-19, indicating completion of the building envelope in early 1919.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the tract office of the Hennepin County Government Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The chain of title includes only the immediate previous owner of the site, however copies of earlier title owners are available in this body of research.

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,  
WAREHOUSE NO. 2  
HABS No. MN-29-5-H (Page 2)

- 1914 Indenture April 28, 1914, recorded April 28, 1914, in Book 763, Page 560. Pratts Express Company to Pillsbury Flour Mill Company parts of Lots 1, 2, 3, connecting tracks of the Minneapolis Eastern Railway Co. with a switch track.
- 1918 Warranty Deed March 27, 1918, filed April 1, 1918, Doc. No. 8 6034, in Book 6034, in Book B33, Page 320-321. Pratts Express Company to Pillsbury Flour Mills Co. Lots One (1), Two (2), Three (3) of Block Fifty (50) in St. Anthony Falls, except the right of way of the railroad company over the rear on Southwesterly thirty (30) feet of said lots.
- 1922 Warranty Deed December 26, 1922, filed December 26, 1922 found in Book of Deeds 946, Page 266 and following. Pillsbury Flour Mills Co. to Pillsbury Washburn Flour Mills Co. entire parcel of land, indicative of change in company structure.

From 1944 through 1958 the company was known as Pillsbury Mills, Inc. From 1958 to the present, the company is known as The Pillsbury Company.

4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers: The original contractor was the H.N. Leighton Co. who also demolished the Pratts Express brick barn which previously occupied the site. The brick is a light cream color. Interior heavy timber was said to be of Minnesota White Pine. The electrical contractor is listed in the building permit files as G.H. Kittridge.
5. Original plans and construction: The City of Minneapolis no longer has the original building plans. The Northwest Architectural Archives now is in the process of cataloging the plans given to it by the Minneapolis Building Inspections Dept. and are not available at this time.

The Pillsbury Co. does have original architectural and site drawings on file, microfilm copies of which are available for viewing at the Pillsbury "A" Mill Complex Maintenance Office.

These plans and "preliminary" plans dated August, 1918, September 23, 1918, November 22, 1918, show that the original intention was to save most of the brick barn of the Pratts Express Co. with the intent of raising the original roof and adding a second floor to make this a two story building along 2nd Street with a one story loading area to the south. The drawings dated November 22, 1918 show the addition of two more stories onto the planned two story building, but including only

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,  
WAREHOUSE NO. 2  
HABS No. MN-29-5-H (Page 3)

the southeast corner of the existing brick barn. A demolition permit granted to the H.N. Leighton Co. on 9-13-18 confirms that it was decided not to use any of the existing stable building, except for a small portion measuring 30 ft. x 60 ft. and two stories high on the southeast corner of the building, as depicted on the November 22, 1918 drawings. Several historic photos show views of the building as seen from the Mississippi River. One photo shows the southwest corner of the Pratt Express brick barn. Historic photos from different time periods show only the view of the building as seen looking North from the river showing parts of the South and East elevations.

6. Alterations and Additions: Documentation of alterations and additions lies primarily with the building permit files of the Minneapolis Building Inspections Department, 250 South Fourth Street, Room 300, Minneapolis, Minnesota. A chronology is as follows:
  - 1918 September 18, 1918. Work commences on building a 2 story brick warehouse measuring 200 ft. x 100 ft. x 22 ft. at a cost of \$30,000 (Permit A 14241) by H.N. Leighton Co.
  - 1918 November 27, 1918. Permit granted for 2 story addition to brick warehouse measuring 56 ft. x 200 ft. x 26 ft. at cost of \$25,000 (Permit A 14295).
  - 1936 August 27, 1936. Permit taken out by H.N. Leighton Co. for a "platform and canopy" for Warehouse No. 2 at a cost of \$1000 (Permit A 22494) at an as yet undetermined location of the building.
  - 1957 March 25, 1957. Permit to "Replace existing platform" measuring 14 ft. x 12 ft. deep, at a cost of \$750. The builder is August Cederstrand. (Permit 8 356148).
  - 1957 April 9, 1957. Loading dock measuring 39 ft. x 20 ft. x 12 ft. at a cost of \$7,500 by August Cederstrand. (Permit B 356385). This is the present day main loading dock for motor freight. It has a steel frame canopy with sheet steel roof. It is located at the Southeast corner of the building on 5th Avenue S.E.

B. Historical Context:

What might aptly be called "The Falls and Rise of Milling in Minneapolis" had its beginning in 1823 when the first mill was completed by Col. Josiah Snelling and his men. The "Old Government Mill" was located at the terminus of Portland Avenue on the west bank of the river, and consisted of a saw mill and a small grist mill.

The Indian treaties of 1851 also played an important role in creating the environment which led to the rise of flour milling in Minneapolis. With southern Minnesota now open to settlement the agricultural base for this industry was further established. The west bank of the Mississippi was opened to development by 1857. (Treaty of Traverse des Sioux 1852-1857).

The geological formation at the St. Anthony site, along with the falls, which drop 55 vertical feet, created a physical environment which was ideal for the establishment of milling. The Platteville Limestone provided an excellent foundation for the buildings with their machinery and resulting vibrations, while the soft underlying St. Peter Sandstone facilitated economical and expedient tunnelling for the tail races and other subterranean features.

The commitment to rail transportation early on in the city's development insured the milling industry both a steady supply of wheat from existing markets, and a direct conduit to the fast developing Dakotas and the hard winter and spring wheat with its high gluten content. The Middlings Purifier and the "high grinding" process developed to process the harder wheat, along with the introduction of roller milling equipment, were technological advancements adding to the superiority of the product itself. The favorable rates given to the millers by the railroads and the favorable tariff rates to overseas markets have all contributed to making Minneapolis the milling capital of the world in its prime.

The Pillsbury "A" Mill was built in 1881 and designed by architect LeRoy S. Buffington, becoming the first mill building to call upon the design services of an important architect.

Once again, Charles A. Pillsbury exhibited his commitment to excellence through use of state of the art milling technology, research and innovative marketing strategies which became the hallmarks of the Pillsbury Company. This was Pillsbury's Best.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building known as Warehouse No. 2 is located at a point which overlooks historic St. Anthony Falls, the birthplace of the Milling Industry in Minneapolis. The building is built of cream colored brick in the common bond with ornamental brick cornice work and small delights such as the round arch brick openings for the roof drains or scuppers. The main warehouse building is four stories, while the loading facilities portion of the building located on the south side of

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,  
WAREHOUSE NO. 2  
HABS No. MN-29-5-H (Page 5)

the site is one story. The Second Street S.E. facade is symmetrical along a central axis giving a balanced look as is the Fifth Avenue S.E. facade of the 4 story part of the building. The single story loading facilities are more utilitarian in nature and do not possess the ornamental features of the 4 story storage portion of the building. It is a good example of a brick warehouse with heavy timber post and beam construction for its internal structure. The Warehouse No. 4 was of the same genre and period of construction but was demolished within the past 20 years by The Pillsbury Company.

2. Condition of fabric: The building has been in continuous use since the date of its construction, and has been maintained adequately by The Pillsbury Company. The single story loading facility on the south side of the building has had a new roof put on within the last 15 years according to the maintenance manager of the complex. The roof of the 4 story storage building still has a composite built-up roof of asphalt and gravel and has been maintained as such. Some window and loading door openings have been totally or partially bricked in with fairly closely matching brick, so that the visual impact is somewhat tempered. There is on-going deterioration of both the brick and mortar at the points where the 2 original cast iron roof drain pipes were removed from the North Elevation along Second Street S.E. The loading dock along Second Street S.E. has also been undergoing slow deterioration since the roof was removed at a previous date.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Pillsbury Company depicts Warehouse No. 2 as having two parts. The one story loading facility on the south side of the warehouse (Bldg. #21) measures 139'-8" long by 49'-0" wide with an attached covered loading dock on the east or Fifth Avenue S.E. side measuring 29 ft. wide 22 ft. deep and a storage shed measuring 56 ft. long x 12 ft. wide. The 4 story storage portion of Warehouse No. 2 has been designated as Bldg. #20, and is located on the north side of the building. Its overall measurements are 199'-4" long x 56'-0" wide.
2. Foundations: Concrete.
3. Walls: The walls of both portions of the building are of common brick. The wall thickness for the single story Bldg. #21 is 12". The walls on each of the four floors of the storage Bldg. #20 are as follows: First and Second Floors are 20 inches thick, brick. Third and Fourth Floors are 16 inches thick, on all four elevations of the building. The 1957 loading dock has a steel frame and sheet metal roof (steel).

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,  
WAREHOUSE NO. 2  
HABS No. MN-29-5-H (Page 6)

4. Structural system, framing: The exterior brick walls are load bearing. The interior structural system is of heavy timber construction, i.e. heavy timber posts with cast iron caps supporting fir beams. (2 - 10" x 22" to 2 - 10" x 14" fir). Purlins are of these fir beams on top of which is a subfloor of 2-1/4" matched flooring, with a finish floor of 7/8 inch maple. The first floor or ground level of the entire Warehouse No. 2 is of 12" concrete on packed cinders. The roof is supported using the same structural system as described above.
5. Loading dock, porches: The Second Street S.E. Loading Dock area is the original docking location. None of the original roof over this area remains. At a later date as yet undetermined, a 78' x 5' reinforced concrete loading platform was installed at the center of the south elevation, serving the remaining 5 operable (loading) dock doors. There is a pedestrian stair at the south end of the loading dock. A small door measuring 2'-6" x 6'-0" was installed into the loading dock door to provide for pedestrian access.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Starting with the 4 story building (Bldg. #20), the main entrance to the office on the East or Fifth Avenue S.E. side measures 3'-0" x 7'-0" with a 2'-0" x 3'-0" transom inset under a sequential brick arch. The profile of an arched roof canopy over this entrance can still be seen, although the canopy is gone. The original main transport entrance was described as a "trolley door", and measures 12'-0" wide x 9'-0" high inset. Directly overhead a double door was cut into the original window opening to enable goods to be lowered to the street level by means of block and tackle system attached to an 8 ft. "I" beam section positioned and projecting from the roof. This door measures 6'-0" wide x 7'-0" high. The loading dock doors on the North Elevation are typically 2-3'0" wide doors x 8'-6" high. Each door has a solid wooden panel as the top panel. A transom measuring 6'-0" x 1'-6" is typical over these doors. Five of the original seven doors remain intact, while the two sets which flank the central platform have been bricked in. Access doors have been cut into left and right halves of the windows on 4th and 3rd Floors respectively over the 4th and 5th remaining dock doors on Fifth Avenue S.E. The loading dock doors on the 1957 addition to Bldg. #21 measure 12'-0" x 12'-0". The loading dock doors on the south elevation of Bldg. #21 were for

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,  
WAREHOUSE NO. 2  
HABS No. MN-29-5-H (Page 7)

loading freight cars but have been bricked in. A newer door measuring 12'-0" x 12'-0" and matching the doors on the 1957 loading dock has been cut into the brick at the far eastern corner of the south elevation of Bldg. #20, adjoining the 1957 loading dock area.

- b. Windows: Starting with Bldg. #20 (4 story), typical window opening measures 6'-0" wide x 4'-6" high and consist of a pair of units each with a 6 light central horizontal pivoting member with a 3 light non-operable unit on the bottom, the entire window unit being fabricated out of steel. The window module or pattern is repeated on the 3 elevations of the warehouse which have windows with only minor variations. In the Second Floor Loading Dock area, the bottom section of non-operable triple lights is omitted, thus measuring 3'-0" x 6'-0" overall. The First Floor windows on the North Elevation become 3'-0" x 6'-0" windows on the 7th, 8th, and 9th bays, with the 8th and 9th bays becoming areaways. The 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 5th bays are typical 4'-6" x 6'-0" windows. The rest of the First Floor windows on this Elevation are all typical except the most southerly first floor window in which the right 3'-0" x 4'-6" half is bricked in and the aforementioned door was cut in. The windows on the South Elevation are all typical 4'-6" x 6'-0" - 6 over 3 light double units. There are three typical window units on the south elevation of Bldg. #21 which are still intact.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof on the 4 story Bldg. #20 is flat (slightly pitched towards Second Street S.E.). This roof is composition on wood covered with tar and gravel. The roof on the single story Bldg. #21 is flat (slightly pitched towards the railroad tracks), and is of modern built-up pitch and gravel material. The roof over the 1957 era loading dock on 5th Avenue S.E. is of corrugated steel as is the 56' x 12' storage shed which flanks the dock area. (Interview with John Putricelli, Maintenance Manager).
- b. Eaves: No eaves. However the brick parapet walls are topped with a tile cap. The shortest wall being 1'-6" and the highest measuring 3'-3".

C. Description of Interior: Not accessible.



D. Site:

The Warehouse No. 2 is situated on the northeastern corner of the site (Block 50, St. Anthony Falls). The loading facility (Bldg. #21) is next to and parallel to the railroad tracks on the south side of the building for easy access to loading and unloading rail cars.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: The City of Minneapolis no longer has the original building plans. The Northwest Architectural Archives now is in the process of cataloging the plans given to it by the Minneapolis Building Inspections Dept. and are not available at this time. The Pillsbury Company has original architectural and site drawings on file, microfilm copies of which are available for viewing at the Pillsbury "A" Mill Complex Maintenance Office. These drawings are somewhat "schematic" in nature and pertain to the building envelope and structural layout.
- B. Early Views: The Audio-Visual Library located at the Minnesota Historical Society in downtown St. Paul has a number of early views (listed below) in their photographic collection.
1. MH5.9 "View of the milling district Pillsbury Mill and  
MP1K elevator" ca. 1948 Aerial view from the southeast showing  
P18 the original rail loading platforms and the pre-1957  
loading area on the S.E. corner of Warehouse #2.
  2. MH5.9 "View along 2nd Street S.E., Mpls." ca. 1932 This  
MP2.2 photo shows trucks backing up to the original 2nd Street  
r131 S.E. loading docks and shows the original roofs over  
this area in profile.
  3. MH5.9 "View of Milling district and stone arch bridge" ca.  
MP3.1P 1940 This view shows the southern elevation of  
P56 Warehouse #2.
  4. MH5.9 "View of Milling Dist., Mpls. showing flour mills." ca.  
MP3.1P 1950 Shows south elevation of Warehouse #2.  
P55
  5. Map of St. Anthony Falls and Vicinity". February 1919, revised  
1934 - Available at the Minnesota Historical Society, Audio-  
Visual Library - Map Room, St. Paul, Minnesota.
  6. 1940 WPA Map - Available at the Minnesota Historical Society,  
Audio-Visual Library - Map Room, St. Paul, Minnesota.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- a. Book of Deeds and Book of Mortgages, Hennepin County Government Center.
- b. Department of Inspections, City of Minneapolis, 129 5th Avenue S.E., (also 418-434 2nd Street S.E.) Lots 1, 2, 3, Block 40, St. Anthony Falls Addition, City of Minneapolis, Building Permits Department, Public Health Building, Room 300.
- c. Tract Index, Saint Anthony Falls Subdivisions, Block 50., Hennepin County Government Center, 8th Floor.

2. Secondary and published sources:

- a. Kane, Lucille M. The Waterfall that Built a City, St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society, 1966 (MHS)
- b. Minneapolis City Directory, 1916-1921.
- c. Northwestern Miller, 1910-1916 Anniversary Issue, 1923 (MHC)
- d. Pillsbury Company, The Story of Flour, Minneapolis, 1923.
- e. Powell, William J. Pillsbury's Best: A Company History From 1869, Minneapolis, Pillsbury Co., 1985.
- f. Saint Anthony Falls Rediscovered, James Berman, ed. Minneapolis: Riverfront Coordination Board, City of Minneapolis, 1980.

Prepared by:  
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University of Minnesota  
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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5143, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data was compiled by Cary Kimmel and Yemi Odeku, University of Minnesota, April 1987.